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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Hungary

25X1 SUBJECT Budapest-Pécs Strategic Highway

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. The construction of the most important Hungarian highway, which will link Pécs with the capital, is nearing completion. The strategic importance of this highway is evident, since the wide concrete highway running west from the Danube and nearly straight south from Budapest to the Yugoslav border, can carry the heaviest Soviet armor. Up to the present, 250 km of this highway have been built. According to the most modern principles this highway i bypassing every larger town or village, as well as railroad and other road crossings, in order to make possible fast and undisturbed passage of military forces.

2. The highway bypasses the Erosi village and runs south along the fields of the State Farm at Sinatelep. Then it bypasses the village of Adony, crosses Stalin City (formerly called Dunapentele), later bypasses Szekszárd and runs along the Danube towards the south. One part of the highway, between Erosi and Szekszard, was built between 1949 and the fall of 1952. In the spring of 1953 at the village of Paks, a 1.5 km bypass was also constructed.

3. According to one of the construction engineers these bypasses also intend to hide what and who is being carried on these highways, from the inhabitants of the various localities. According to the same source the strategic importance of this highway is also evident from the fact that the road is being built as straight as possible, avoiding sharp curves, etc. For instance, south of the town of Szekszard, where the highway runs quite straight to the south, a great many railroad and road underpasses as well as bridges have been built. This highway also puts an end to the difficulty arising when, due to bad weather, Pecs and the Yugoslav borderland could only be reached by car, taking a long detour via Siófok and Kaposvar.

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4. The surface of this highway is mostly concrete. There are, however, five to ten km stretches with an asphalt surface. At the village of Hidas a high dam and dam-bridge had to be built. Here a new method of surfacing has been tried for the first time in the Hungarian Peoples Democracy. The surface was covered by prefabricated concrete slabs, each 1 square meter, which were then joined with iron reinforcing bars and mortar. In case the dam sinks occasionally these slabs can easily be exchanged.

5. The new strategic highway reaches the Southern Mecsek Mountains at the village of Mecsekmádasd. Here the highway is led in an easy serpentine with due regard to the expected heavy military traffic. The old highway had a grade of 19 to 21 percent which according to Soviet experts would have been too steep for heavy armor. Thus, nowhere on the new highway is the grade more than five percent. Due to this, approximately 70,000 cubic meters of rock had to be blasted and 1,250,000 cubic meters of earth had to be moved in the course of additional work.

6. The only unfinished part of the highway is shortly before Pécsvárad. This part will not be ready until a much later date. Traffic on this section is being detoured. Great difficulties had been encountered here, since the building of two large viaducts was found necessary. At present work is being carried out on this section with great speed, and the bulldozing of the ground between the two viaducts, to the length of 1.5 km, has also begun. The chief engineer responsible for these works [redacted] employed 25X1 by the State Highway Building Company. This company has the most up-to-date highway construction equipment in Hungary. Thus 95 percent of concreting, and 75 percent of all earth moving can be carried out by mechanical means. One earth moving machine of the company is able to move 500 cubic meters of earth daily, thus replacing 50 workmen. Three such cranes are being serviced by a caterpillar tractor of the Stalinec type. The cranes carry the earth where it is needed. Scraping of the earth, however, is being done with the help of the tractors.

7. The first of the above-mentioned viaducts is the largest viaduct in the country. It is 32 meters high and 180 meters long, spanning the Varasd valley. The viaduct is being held by a concrete arch 96 meters in span. The scaffolding for this was built in February 1952. A cable elevator with a 24 meter high tower has also been erected at the bridgehead. The work with it did not proceed as expected. There were also great difficulties during the winter due to a shortage of material. Snow also delayed the work. Only by April 1953 could the scheduled norms be achieved. The man responsible for this extremely important construction work is an enigma. Sometimes experts from the Budapest Hungarian Ministry and also Soviet experts come to inspect the construction of this highway, nevertheless, the whole work is entrusted to a 23 year old beginner. The contractor is the Bridge Constructing State Enterprise, led at present by engineer Cornelius Kerenyi, who by the spring of 1952 had not yet received his diploma, and it is very difficult to believe that he has been promoted to such an important job due to his Party activities alone. He received his diploma in the summer of 1952, [redacted] and worked for a short time at the construction of the Kussuth and Petori Bridges. He was appointed to the above-mentioned job at the beginning of 1953.

8. The other viaduct is 140 meters long.

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